



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 2
290 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NY 10007-1866

AUG 23 2012

The Honorable Didi Barrett
New York State Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 532
Albany, New York 11248

Dear Assemblymember Barrett:

Thank you for your letter of August 7, 2012 concerning the effects of the fire at the TCI Incorporated facility in West Ghent, New York. We agree the public needs to be kept informed about the response to this incident and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was pleased to participate in your August 16, 2012 public meeting.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation is the lead environmental agency for the Ghent fire. The EPA's role was as an assisting agency primarily engaged in real-time air monitoring for volatile organic compounds and particulates found in smoke plumes during oil fires. The EPA assisted NYSDEC in collecting wipe samples for PCBs and sampling runoff water and soil.

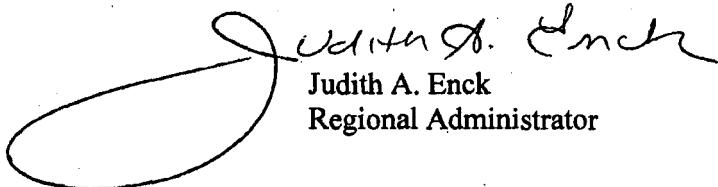
The EPA and NYSDEC coordinated closely to determine the best course of action for sampling and monitoring the air, water and soil to determine potential hazards. At the request of NYSDEC, the results of all EPA sampling were compiled and released to the state for dissemination. The sampling results were provided at the August 16, 2012 meeting and the data is available on the Columbia County Emergency Management Facebook page. A summary of the EPA sampling efforts is attached.

NYSDEC and the New York State Department of Health determined that no further sampling was necessary for them to issue health and safety recommendations to the public. Their decision was based on real-time air monitoring data taken at the scene, as well the absence of PCBs in wipe samples taken in the most heavily contaminated areas impacted by the smoke from the fire. The Deputy Commissioner of the New York State Department of Health stated, "All of the data we have indicates that there is little evidence for people's potential exposure to PCBs, dioxins and furans in the surrounding area from this fire. Therefore, no additional tests are necessary to evaluate people's exposure off-site. People should be proceeding with the appropriate cleaning of surfaces and gardens as outlined in our previous directions." The New York State Department of Health issued information on appropriate methods to clean gardens, exterior and interior surfaces in an August 8, 2012 press release, which is posted on the agency's website.

The EPA agrees with the precautionary measures and recommendations issued by the New York State Department of Health on the effects of the fire on your constituents' health, their food crops and their properties.

If you have further questions, please contact me at 212-637-5000 or your staff can contact Todd Calongne, Intergovernmental and Community Affairs Branch Chief, at 212-637-3657.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Judith A. Enck". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning. It is positioned to the left of the printed name and title.

Judith A. Enck
Judith A. Enck
Regional Administrator

ATTACHMENT

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Summary of Sampling and Monitoring Activities
TCI Incorporated Recycling Facility August 2 Fire in West Ghent, New York**

- On Thursday, August 2, 2012, NYSDEC took initial wipe samples in areas most heavily affected by the fire. These were analyzed and no levels of PCBs were detected.
- On Friday, August 3, 2012, NYSDEC, with EPA assistance, took additional wipe samples in areas immediately surrounding the facility, as well as outlying areas in adjoining towns downwind and directly in the path of the smoke plume. Towns included in these sampling events included Philmont, Stuyvesant Falls, Kinderhook, Valatie, Claverack, Chatham and Austerlitz. Analysis of these samples also found non-detectable levels of PCBs.
- During the initial stages of the incident, the EPA took samples of runoff water from the fire and samples of on-site soil affected by runoff water. Analysis of the water samples also found non-detectable levels of PCBs. All but one of the soil samples was "non-detect" for PCBs. Analysis of the one soil sample showed low levels of PCBs -- 131 parts per billion. The NYSDEC action level for a PCB soil cleanup in residential settings is 1.0 part per million, nearly eight times greater than the level found in this one soil sample.
- During the course of this fire, the EPA conducted continuous air monitoring for volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and particulates. Although there were low levels of VOCs noted at the fence line of the facility during the fire, 500 yards downwind from the site, all levels for VOCs were within background ranges.
- The EPA Region 1 Emergency Response program based in Boston, Massachusetts also conducted additional air monitoring and air sampling in western Massachusetts and Connecticut. This sampling was for both dioxins and PCBs. While final validated results have not yet been received, preliminary results of the air monitoring and sampling data revealed all levels to be within background ranges.
- All of the EPA Region 2 data for the monitoring and sampling activities have been turned over to NYSDEC for public dissemination. When the final, validated data from the Region 1 sampling are received, they will also be turned over to NYSDEC for public dissemination.
- All sampling data from both EPA and NYSDEC are available to the public through Columbia County's Facebook page:
<http://www.facebook.com/columbiacountyemergencymanagementoffice>.



Fw: USEPA Has Responded to Chemical Fire at the TCI Facility in Ghent

Berry Shore to: steve_mann

08/02/2012 11:08 AM

From: Berry Shore/R2/USEPA/US
To: steve_mann@schumer.senate.gov



Berry Shore

Fw: USEPA Has Responded to Chemical Fire at the TCI Facility in Ghent

Steve:

Called your office this morning but you were not in. Left a voice mail

EPA became aware of the fire a 1:30AM this morning. We have sent three on-scene coordinators who specialize in emergency response to the facility to help in conducting air monitoring activities.



USEPA Has Responded to Chemical Fire at the TCI Facility in Ghent

Berry Shore to: David_Connors

08/02/2012 11:12 AM

From: Berry Shore/R2/USEPA/US
To: David_Connors@gillibrand.senate.gov

Berry Shore	USEPA Has Responded to Chemical Fire at the TCI Facility in Ghent

David:

Called your office this morning but you were not in. Left a message for you.

EPA became aware of the fire a 1:30AM this morning. We have sent three on-scene coordinators who specialize in emergency response to the facility to help in conducting air monitoring activities.

New York State is taking the lead in responding to the fire.



Info on TCI Fire

Berry Shore to: mark.decaprio

08/02/2012 12:36 PM

From: Berry Shore/R2/USEPA/US

To: mark.decaprio@ct.gov

	Berry Shore	Info on TCI Fire

Mark:

This is several hours old, so things may have changed.

At approximately 1:30 AM, EPA was notified of a fire at the TCI facility in Ghent, New York.

- The facility is a hazardous materials recycling facility that specializes in high concentration (>500 ppm) PCB containing oils.
- The NYS DEC has told us the facility contained materials including sodium metal, LPG, various waste oils and PCB oil.
- Other materials are thought to be present in the building.
- It is estimated that the facility contained 80,000 gallons of oil.
- The initial concern of the NYSDEC concerns the generation of dioxins from the combustion of the PCB's and other waste oils.
- At that time, local emergency management officials had evacuated a 1/2 mile radius around the facility.
- DEC requested immediate assistance from EPA for air monitoring, air sampling and general multi-media sampling. We sent people there to assist them in this regard.



RE: USEPA Has Responded to Chemical Fire at the TCI Facility in Ghent

Berry Shore to: Bulger, Steve

08/06/2012 02:22 PM

From: Berry Shore/R2/USEPA/US
To: "Bulger, Steve" <Steve.Bulger@mail.house.gov>

	Berry Shore	USEPA Has Responded to Chemical Fire at the TCI Facility in Ghent
	Bulger, Steve	<i>Thanks Berry. Is there any update on this from your team's end? We'</i>
	Berry Shore	<i>Steve: As you know we are supporting the NYS DEC, which is t</i>

Steve:

As you know we are supporting the NYS DEC, which is the lead Agency for this response. Real-time air monitoring by the USEPA for particulate and volatile organic compounds found no levels of concern last Thursday. We sampled local water bodies and soil for PCBs and our results are not back yet.

You may wish to contact the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation which is the lead responder and has the best overview off all action associated with the response.

We were told by NY state officials that the The Columbia County Emergency Management Facebook page is probably the best one-stop source for information relating to the response and does have some updated summary data from the state, so you might want to try them at:
<http://www.facebook.com/columbiacountyemergencymanagementoffice>

"Bulger, Steve"

Thanks Berry. Is there any update on this from y...

08/06/2012 12:50:34 PM

From: "Bulger, Steve" <Steve.Bulger@mail.house.gov>
To: Berry Shore/R2/USEPA/US@EPA
Date: 08/06/2012 12:50 PM
Subject: RE: USEPA Has Responded to Chemical Fire at the TCI Facility in Ghent

Thanks Berry. Is there any update on this from your team's end? We're getting calls from constituents in that area who are concerned about possible contamination, etc. I know the State is taking the lead role here, but any insight is welcome. Thanks!

Steve

From: Berry Shore [mailto:Shore.Berry@epamail.epa.gov]
Sent: Thursday, August 02, 2012 11:06 AM
To: Bulger, Steve
Subject: USEPA Has Responded to Chemical Fire at the TCI Facility in Ghent

Steve:

Called your office this morning but you were not in.

EPA became aware of the fire at 1:30AM this morning. We have sent three on-scene coordinators who specialize in emergency response to the facility.

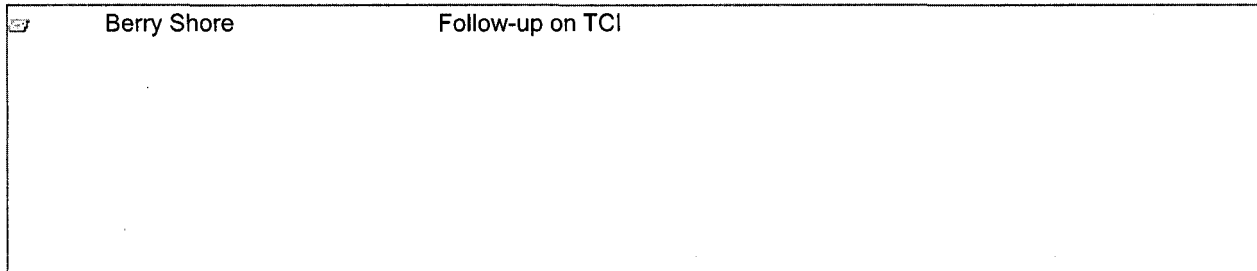


Follow-up on TCI

Berry Shore to: David_Connors

08/09/2012 08:50 AM

From: Berry Shore/R2/USEPA/US
To: David_Connors@gillibrand.senate.gov



Dave:

As a follow-up to our conversation yesterday.

All of the EPA data for the monitoring and sampling activities were turned over to NYSDEC. The data is available to the public on Columbia County's Facebook page.
<http://www.facebook.com/columbiacountyemergencymanagementoffice>

It is also our understanding , TCI Incorporated in coordinatioin with their insurance company has put out a release stating that a toll free hotline has been set up for "property owners affected by the fire" and that "an adjuster will be assigned to evaluate their concerns".

<http://www.tci-pcb.com/>

For further information on health impacts I would refer citizens o NYSDOH withtheir office of public information. Contacts are John Emery and Bill Schwartz at (516) 759-4227.